VIII

A Short Account OF THE Present STATE OF New-England.

Anno Domini 1690.

SIR,

THAT large tract of Land, which lies between the Degrees of *Forty* and *Forty-five*, is known by the general Name of New-England, but divided into many Provinces and Colonies; most of which had, in times past, distinct Governments, and made such Laws as seem'd best and most agreeable to their particular Frames and Constitutions; which interfering with the Interests of their Neighbours; and indeed, being framed for some private Interest, more than for the Publick Good, they lived not in that Peace and Quiet, which was necessary for the Preservation and good Establishment of those Young Settlements, but had continual petts & differences among themselves, till in the Year 1686 they were all united and cast into one Government, which was committed to the care of Sir *Edmond Andros*.

The Names of the several Colonies and Provinces, are these that follow, *Road-Island*, *Plymouth*, *Narraganset* Country, *Connecticot*, *New-Hampshire*, Province of *Maine*, & the *Massachusett's*-Colony.

Road-Island is of a considerable bigness, and justly called the *Garden of New-England*, for its Fertility and Pleasantness. It abounds with all things necessary for the life of Man, is excel-

lent for Sheep, Kine and Horſes; and being environed by the Sea, it is free'd from the dangers of Bears, Wolves and Foxes, which much moleſt and damniſie thoſe that live on the Continent.

The People for ſome tract of time had a Charter to themſelves, lived under a Governour of their own chooſing, and Laws of their own making: But in Year 1686, upon ſerving the *Quo Warranto*, they freely reſigned up their Charter to His Majeſty, and continue ſo well ſatisfied with the ſurrender, that they do not ſo much as petition for their Charter again.

Here is a medley of moſt Perſwaſions, but neither Church nor Meeting-houſe, except one built for the uſe of the *Quakers*, who are here very numerous, and have annually a General Meeting from all Quarters.

Many of the others regard neither Time, nor Place, nor Worſhip; and even ſome very ſober men have lived ſo long without it, that they think all inſtituted Religion uſeleſs.

The People live in great plenty, ſend Horſes and Proviſions to *Barbadoes*, and the *Leeward-Iſlands*, and ſell great numbers of fat Oxen and Sheep to the Butchers of *Boſton*.

The ſettlement of this Colony, was in this manner; The People of *Boſton*, who always had a perfect hatred againſt all thoſe who differed in Opinion from them, had ſome *Quakers* in the Land; and how to rid themſelves fairly of theſe, they had many Conſultations, which at laſt ended in this reſult; They would baniſh them to ſome place or other, from whence they might be ſure to be never troubled with them again; So they baniſh'd the *Quakers* to this Iſland, where in all probability they muſt have periſh'd with hunger, or elſe been deſtroyed by the Heathens: hither theſe poor people being come, dig themſelves Caves in the earth, and by the kindneſs of the *Indians*, outlive the ſeverity of a long and ſharp Winter. The Spring coming on, they obtain'd leave from the *Sachem* to manure the ground, and in a little time wrought themſelves into good Eſtates, which ſome even of the firſt ſetlers enjoy to this day. Being thus happily ſettled, they Petitioned King *Charles* II. that they might have a Charter to themſelves, fearing leaſt they ſhould fall under the laſh of the *Boſtoners* again, who had been ſo Inhumane and Barbarous to them in their baniſhment.

Plymouth compared with the former is but a mean and poor

poor Country, yet the ground well compenſates the Husbandman's labour with good crops of Corn; and being wash'd by the Sea, they make great benefit by Fiſhery; as alſo their Bay, of late years, is much inrich'd by great numbers of Whales which come into it; and even the Rocky Mountains yield them conſiderable profit, for on them grow plenty of Pine-trees, out of which they make abundance of Tar for their Ships.

The Religion of the Country is exactly after the model of *Boſton* and the *Maſſachuſetts*, from whom they receive Directions and Miniſters.

This People being without Law, and without Government from *England*, choſe Governours and made Laws for themſelves; of all which *Hinckleys* is the moſt Famous, whereby they ſtript the poor *Quakers* of all that many of them had, for not coming to their Meetings.

In this Eſtate they continued without any Charter, till King *James* ordered them to be under the Governmene of Sir *Edmond Andros*. The late Addreſs they made to Their Majeſties, acknowledges as much, in which they petition for Their Majeſties Grant to be a diſtinct Government.

The Narraganſett Countrey is a large tract of Ground, little inhabited, but the greateſt part of the Country is taken up by ſeveral Perſons. Some of the *Boſtoners* claim a propriety for ſeveral miles together, but never take care to make the leaſt Improvement. Churches here are none, and but a few Houſes: I cannot ſay there is one *Engliſh* Town in the whole Province.

What is moſt conſiderable in the *Narraganſett* Country, is the ſettlement of the *French Proteſtants*; who, on the violence of the Perſecution, left their Country, came over to *New-England*, and took up their habitation in this Wilderneſs; where they have made good improvement, live comfortably, and have planted great numbers of Vines, which they ſay thrive well, and it is hoped will be very beneficial to them.

This Wilderneſs leads to a very fertile and pleaſant Country called Connecticott, which may be truly ſtyled the glory of the *Maine*, for richneſs of Soil, and product of the Ground; there being great plenty of Wheat, Barley and Grain, with abundance of Sheep, Kine and Horſes. It may well be called, as many will have it, the *Ægypt* of *America* from its wonderful

fertility, and that from the overflowing of the great River *Connecticot*, which, like *Nilus*, annually overfloweth the banks, and thereby inricheth the Soil.

This Country hath many inhabitants who live in great plenty, and communicate largely towards the support of *Boston*, whether they send annually great quantity of Wheat and other grain, with many Head of fed Cattle.

As *New-England*, in General, is Healthy, so this Countrey shares in that great Blessing. However, after great Glutts of Rain, the *Feavey* and *Ague* make some unwelcome Visits among them.

Here are many Towns and Villages, the greatest of all is called *Hartford*, where they have their general Meetings, and keep Courts of Judicature, and transact publick Affairs. In this Town are two Meeting-Houses for publick Worship, which shews it is large and well Peopled.

In Religion, they generally follow the Model of the *Massachusett-Independents*, by whom they are managed and governed in all things.

This People lived for some time under a Charter-Government; but in the Year 1687, resigning their Charter, they desired to be put under Sir *Edmond Andros*'s Government; and at his Arrival among them, they received him with great joy, and lived very quiet under him, till the grand rising at *Boston*, whose Example they followed, and set up their Charter again.

New-Hampshire is another Province, very healthy, and well settled, hath an excellent Harbour for Ships, where they may ride very secure in all weather. Their Soil is none of the best, nor the Countrey the most pleasant in the World; but yet, as it is, they raise abundance of Corn and Provision; and the meanness of the Soil, is fully compensated another way. For in this, and in the neighbouring Province of *Maine*, grow those stately Trees, which make as good Masts, as any in the World, and in such abundance, that scarce any part of the World can shew the like. They send many to *England*, and have wherewith to supply, not only Their Majesties Navy, but if well Husbanded, the whole Nation. It is pity there should be such havock made of those stately Trees, which without number they Yearly cut down and saw into Boards.

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VIII

The People live friendly together, freer in Converſation than moſt of their Countrey-men, and given to Hoſpitality.

What Religion they have, comes from *Boſton*, but at preſent, their chief Town is deſtitute of all publick Worſhip; for their Teacher, with whom they entred into mutual Church-Covenant, has forſaken them, having got himſelf a richer Church in *Boſton*.

This People for many Years have lived under the immediate Government of the Crown of *England*; and being in the late riſing, ſtirred up by ſome of their neighbours, to aſſume a Government to themſelves, anſwered, that they were well, and eaſy, and deſired ſo to continue.

The Province of Maine, is an excellent Tract of Land, but I am afraid at this time, without Inhabitants; the People being either killed, or carried away captives, by the *Indians*, or elſe fled to *Boſton* for preſervation of their Lives.

As in *New-Hampſhire*, ſo here grow the Trees for Maſts, with all other ſorts of Timber for Shipping; upon which Account, it is preferable to any part of *New-England*. The Soil is very rich, well requiting the Husbandmans labour and pains: So bountiful hath Nature been to the Land, and no leſs kind to the Sea-coaſt: For on theſe ſhoars is the beſt Fiſhing ground in all the *Engliſh* Dominions, where are annually caught Ship-loads of *Cod*, and other great Fiſhes. For Harbour, it may compare with moſt Countries of the World; having thoſe that are ſpacious and ſecure againſt all Storms, as if God Almighty had deſigned it for a great and mighty People. I lament the preſent deſolations of this Countrey; for it had Towns, Villages, and Forts, till very lately; but now the Towns are burnt, and the Forts demoliſhed, for which devaſtations, in great meaſure, they are bound to thank their New *Lords* of *Boſton*.

The Governour, Sir *Edmond Androſs*, had ſo covered the Countrey againſt the Incurſions of the *Indians*, that all the time the Government reſted in his hands, the People were in the greateſt ſafety, and not the leaſt miſchief happened unto them.

But upon the Riſing of the People of *Boſton*, the *Patriots* there, re-called the Forces from thence, and left the whole Countrey a Prey to their ſavage Enemies. So that *April* laſt, when the *Boſtoners* took the Reins of Government into their hands, to the 30*th*. of *July*, there were above an hundred of the poor.

poor Countrey People killed, or carried away captives, Houſes burnt, Forts razed, and all their Goods pillaged by the Enemy.

It remains to give a Deſcription of the *Maſſachuſetts*, which is the leaſt of all the *Colonies*, but would be accounted the greateſt; nay, they are very deſirous to appropriate the name of *New-England* to themſelves, and endeavour what they can to extend their Common-wealth over the greateſt part of that Continent.

For they claim a right to a great part of the *Narraganſet*-Countrey, alledging that the Lands belong to them, becauſe they bought it of the Natives.

In the like manner, they ſay, that the Province of *Maine* is theirs; for Mr. *Uſher* bought the Government, as well as the Soil of the *Proprietor*, and they bought it of Mr. *Uſher*. They may alſo ſay a Title to *Connecticott*, and *Plymouth*; becauſe there, the generality of the People are of the ſame perſwaſion with them of *Boſton*, and thoſe *Colonies* have all along been Governed and Managed by the *Maſſachuſetts*. But yet by their Charter, they are bounded within *Merimack* River, and *Charles* River; which bounds it is to be hoped Their Majeſties will not ſuffer them to exceed.

The Countrey in ſome part is very ſtony and mountainous, ſo that for many miles together, little elſe is to be ſeen but Shrubs, a few ſcattering Trees, and the griſly head of Rocks. In other places, it is very dry and ſandy, little profitable to the Husbandman, without great plenty of Rain and Showers. The Soil is but poor of it ſelf; and yet at firſt ſettlement, the Countrey-mans labour was well rewarded with good crops of Wheat, excellent Peaſe, and other Grain; but for many Years, the Wheat hath been continually blaſted, and the Peaſe breed a Worm in themſelves, which eats out the heart, and leaves only the huſk for the Planter.

For the generality of the people, they are very cenſorious, and ready, on all occaſions, to judge one another; and ſome there are among themſelves that attribute this plague to the immediate hand of God for the cruelty of the people againſt the *Quakers*. The cauſe is ſecret, but it is a general obſervation, that much about that time when the *Quakers* ſuffered, came the blaſting on the Wheat, and the Worm into the Peaſe.

Indian Corn is the ſtaff of the Land, and that on which they have the greateſt dependance; for if that fails, all is gone. The ſins committed in Huſking of it are very great and notorious,

torious, it is much to be feared God will enter into judgement with them for it, and ſmite the *Indian* Corn with a Curſe.

The Commodities of the Colony are quickly reckoned up; for thô in Print they boaſt of the Trade they can drive with their Fiſh and Lumber-Goods, yet they have in truth, but little Lumber, and leſs Fiſh, except what they receive from the Fiſhermen and Inhabitants of the Province of *Maine* and *New Hampſhire*, and not one Tree in the Land that will make a Maſt for a Ship. 'Tis true, the *Maſſachuſetts* build many Ships, and other Veſſels, but they bring moſt of their Materials from other Countreys; as alſo they ſend abroad many Veſſels laden with Boards, Pipe, Staves, and Proviſions, all which are but as borrowed Goods which they fetch out of the neighbouring Colonies.

This Colony hath many Towns and Villages, of which the greateſt is *Boſton*, large and well peopled, where are kept the Courts of Judicature, and the publick Records of the Countrey.

The people are naturally courteous, affable and obliging, but for the Government of them, who are all of the gathered Churches, *their Separate way* makes them very high and unſociable, looking on others as mean abject creatures, who deſerve their *Pity* rather than their *Company*.

In their Dealings they are very crafty and ſubtle, out-doing even Jews themſelves, who (as I heard a *New-England-man* boaſtingly ſay) could not live amongſt them. They are watchful of all advantages over them they deal with, and when they have a Man within their Clutches, gripe him unmercifully. In their Treats they are very laviſh and expenſive; where they conceive a prejudice they are revengeful, and very Religiouſly pray for deſtruction on their Enemies. Hence ſome that knew them very well, have given this caution to their Children, *Above all Perſons, take heed of a Profeſſor.*

This I ſay for the generality of them, not but that there are many worthy, charitable, and Religious people among them, (who as I am fully perſwaded) ſerve God with a perfect heart, and love their Neighbour with love unfeigned.

But as in all other places, ſo among the *Maſſachuſetts*, Vice greatly abounds, and there is no ſin in *Old England*, but what is practiced in the *New*. However ſome Sins ſpeed worſe among them than others. Swearing, Curſing, and Blaſpheming

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are justly discountenanc'd: but they who scruple an Oath will make no conscience to Lye or Cheat for advantage. The Capital Vices are Sloth and Idleness, Cheating and Censoriousness; prone they are also to a Sin of Frailty (as they term it) and Lascivionsness, which appears too much in their Common Conversation.

The *Trade* of the Countrey is well known, and for the most part unlawful. Of all the *Colonies* this has been most prejudicial to the *Kings Customes*, and the *Trade* of *England*, which hath been sufficiently proved against them. Of themselves they bring no considerable *Revenue* to the Crown, of which more in the *Remarks*, as also of their famous *Colledge*, and great works of *Evangelizing Indians*.

The Laws of *England* are of no Credit among them, and when pleaded in their Courts are little regarded; but they have Composed a body of Laws for themselves, which are Printed together in a thin Folio. The Book is scarce to be had here in *England*, and therefore not at all taken notice of; otherwise it would move the Publick Indignation to see how the Fortunes and Lives of their Majesties Subjects are disposed of by a Combination of Men, that think themselves Wiser than the Parliament of this Kingdom.

The Government was first by way of Charter, which was chiefly Managed by the *Teachers*. These by their power with the people, made all the Magistrates, and kept them so entirely under Obedience, that they durst not act without them. So that whenever any thing strange or unusual, was brought before them, they would not determine the matter without consulting the *Teachers*. For should any be so sturdy as to presume to act of himself without taking their advice and direction, he might be sure of it, his Magistracy ended with the Year.

The World justly condemns the Usurped Power of the *Popish Clergy* over the *Laity*, yet the *Priests* even in *Italy*, have not a greater *Ascendant* over the People than the *Teachers* in *New-England*.

And that they might perpetuate the Government to themselves, they so brought things about (as indeed they might do what they listed) that it was past into a Law, that none should have any thing to do with the Government, that was not a Freeman of the Country; and none should be made a Freeman,

Freeman, who was not in full Communion with their Churches, that is, who should not in all points, be of the Preachers Opinion.

The way of making Freemen was after this manner. He that desired the Freedom of the Country came, and made known his request to the Court; whom tho never so sober in Life and Conversation, if he favoured not the *Independent* persuasion, he was certainly rejected, either as an Enemy to the Church or State; But whoever came with such powerful Credentials as these, *The Bearer is a godly Man, and in Communion with such a Church, Given under my hand N. N.* or *under the hands of his Deacons.* Such a Man needed not to seek for other Arguments to gain the favour of the Magistrates, for without any other formality he might be sure to have the grant of his Freedom. For this reason many formal Hypocrites, who were ambitious of Honour and Preferment, would work themselves into the favour of the *Teachers*. To this end, besides many costly Treats and Presents, they would in the Meeting-Houses frame Stories of their Conversion, and enter into Church-Covenant (as the Phrase is) and make a *long Came* how the Work of Grace was wrought on their hearts, by the Sermon or Pains of one of the Leading *Teachers*. Whereupon such were admitted into the Fraternity, and made Church-Members, and there they were in a fair way to the highest Preferment.

It was pleasant to behold poor *Coblers* and pitiful *Mechanicks*, which had neither House nor Land, strutting and making no mean Figure at their Elections; and some of the richest Merchants and wealthiest People stand by as insignificant Cyphers; or in the words of one of their own, who thought he characteriz'd them ingeniously, as so many Asses to bear the Loads that should be laid upon them.

In the late Rising there were many Divisions among the People, what Government to erect. Many of the Council (as they term'd themselves) were for declaring themselves a Free-State. But Mr. *Stoughton* well knowing their weakness, would not Subscribe the Summons sent to the Governour, unless dependance on the Crown of *England* should be inserted into the Declaration. Some were for a Court-Martial and Military Government, because what they got by the Sword, they ought to keep by the Sword. Others were for Election of Governour and

and Magiſtrates by all the People. But the *Teachers*, who all along were the Chief in the Councils, and carried the Ballance in their hands, diſlik'd ſuch Propoſals, for then they ſhould loſe their Power; and therefore they moved, that the old Governour and Magiſtrates formerly of their own making might be reſtored, with the Addition of ſome confiding Men, whom they had proved and found Faithful, to ſupply the Vacancies of thoſe Magiſtrates which were dead; to whom all bowed and paid Obedience: So that now the Government is ſafely lodged in the hands of the *Teachers* again.

'Tis hard to give an account of the Religion of the Colony where ſo many know not what Religion they are of, and when demanded a reaſon of their Faith, can ſay little more than that they are Hearers of Mr. *Mather*, or Members of the *Old Church*, or under the watch of the *South Meeting-Houſe*.

But having promiſed an account of the Country, it is neceſſary that I ſhould give ſome account of their Religion, becauſe it is a large Topick of their diſcourſe, makes the great noiſe among the People.

The firſt Setlers were a good ſerious ſort of People who had the fear of God before their eyes, and firm aſſurance of his providence, otherwiſe they never had undertaken that hazardous deſign. I cannot ſay what perſuaſion they were of, but this I know they ſtil'd themſelves Children of the *Church of England*, and counted it their glory to be called after her Name; and at their departure from hence, in all humble duty they deſired the Prayers of the Biſhop of *London* and his *Clergy*, for them, who came out of their own boſoms, and who ſhould continually offer up their Prayers to the Throne of Grace for the Proſperity of the Church. All which with a great deal more to the ſame effect was written in a Letter ſent to the Biſhop of *London* from on board the *Arabella*, and ſubſcribed by *Governour*, *Magiſtrates* and *Miniſters*.

But they had not been long in the *New World*, before all ſorts of People flock'd over unto them, of as different Principles as places; which cauſed no ſmall trouble to the Inhabitants, for one was for this Model, another for that Platform; ſo that they were like to be ſcattered and deſtroyed by Religion, which ſhould have united and preſerved them.

It was therefore thought neceſſary ſomething ſhould be Eſtabliſhed, that they might not be always a confuſed *Babel*.

Whereupon

Whereupon after much Strife and Contention they ſetled on *Independency*, which hath indeed a ſhew of much Purity and Holineſs, but hath in truth that which is highly Superſtitious, as Mr. *Willard*, one of their own, declared in a Publick Convocation; and as another *Non-Conformiſt* Miniſter term'd it *Paganizing Independency*. For three fourths of the Country never participate of the *Lords Supper*, and if any ſhould beg it, as for the Salvation of his Soul, yet he could not obtain his requeſt without coming up to their Terms, and telling Stories of the time of this Converſion, and when the Work of Grace was wrought upon his heart. Even in the ſpace of little more than one Generation, near one half of the People are *Un-baptized*, and let Parents do what they can for their Children, let them give never ſo good account of their Faith, and live never ſo uprightly towards God and Man, yet their Children ſhall not be admitted to Baptiſm, unleſs one of the Parents be of *their Communion*, and promiſes to walk after the *Church Covenant*; ſo that in a few Ages by their *Independent* Practice, *Paganiſm* will a ſecond time overcome the Land, and there will be as much need of *Evangelizing* the *Engliſh*, as there is now of the *Indians*.

This overtoping Perſuaſion would have none to grow under it, if continual droping could prevent it; yet its natural Iſſue *Anabaptiſm* ſprouts out amain. However the *Independants* have treated the *Anabaptiſts* very unkindly, fined them for not coming to the *Independent Aſſemblies*, nailed up the Doors of their Meeting-Houſes, and turned them into the Streets.

Beſides theſe, there is another Sect arrived to great Perfection, who were for none but *King Jeſus*. Alſo there are *Quakers*, notwithſtanding the Severities that they have ſuffered among them, all theſe having ſuffered Baniſhment formerly, and ſome of them having been put to Death for their Religion.

For theſe and many other Uſurpations and Stretches of Government, a *Scire facias* was iſſued out of the High Court of Chancery, and timely notice given them for their appearance. (But they well knowing their own Guiltineſs) never took care that any ſhould appear and defend the Suit, but ſent their *Agents* with a Power to laviſh out four or five thouſand pounds to corrupt Juſtice. Whereupon after theſe delays had continued for ſome years, at laſt Judgement was entred againſt them; and the then King *Charles* II. reſumed

their Charter-Grant, that their hands might be tyed up from persecuting their Brethren and doing more Mischief.

Afterward in the Year 1686. Sir *Edmond Andros* came over with a Commission to Govern the Country, and during the time that he was in the Government (as it will certainly appear when the matter comes to be examined by indifferent Judges) he carried himself courteously and obligingly to all, gave an excellent Patern of Sobriety and Temperance, and in all things perform'd the Duty of a good Governour.

But because he would not let the *Teachers* have their Wills in all things, and follow their directions in every matter; therefore they raised false Accusations against him, lessened his good Actions, and misrepresented his *Government* to the People as *Illegal* and *Arbitrary*: and not contented herewith, the *Heads* of the *Party* came over hither into *England*, and charged him with *Injustice*, *Oppression* and *Violence*, made Addresses to King *James*, promising to do whatsoever he would have them, and to be instrumental with their *Party* in *England* to pull down the Fence against *Popery*, and *Repeal* the *Penal Laws*. Particularly they Courted *William Penn*, and made their Humble Applications to Father *Petre*, to have the Governour recall'd and their Old Charter restored.

But when all these accursed Methods proved ineffectual, what the *Quaker* could not do, and what the *Popish Priest* would not, impatient of any delays, they attempted themselves on the 18*th* of *April*, in a Tumultuous manner, they wrested the Government out of Sir *Edmond's* hand, made him Prisoner, and so they did all others of the *Church* of *England* as by Law Established, who were in any Office *Civil* or *Military*, committing him and some other Gentlemen to the *Fort*, others to the *Castle*, and more to the *Common Goal*.

The particulars of this Transaction may in convenient time be made publick. In the mean while, I beg of you, and of all other Gentlemen, to whom you shall think fit to communicate this Paper, that you would be pleased to suspend your Judgements concerning the Case of the *Complainants*, till the Matter, in Question, comes to be heard before its proper Judges. I am,

Yours, N. N.

FINIS.